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door was open, and Governor Wolcott could be seen going down the walk thumping his cane in great indignation."

A lady now eighty years of age adds that this incident has been often told to her, and that it was at the time "in everybody's mouth." This information ought to be conclusive.

May it not be that Mr. Lyman Beecher's extreme theological views on this and kindred subjects became—as was the case with his son, Henry Ward Beecher—materially modified during the later years of his life? If so, this would explain the discrepancy of opinion existing on the subject.

C. K. TUCKERMAN.

III.

CHANGES IN MY BALLOT BILL.

THE measure known as the Ballot-Reform Bill has been approved by both branches of the New York Legislature, and will soon be placed in the hands of the Governor. I am requested by THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW to point out the changes that were made in it during its progress through the Senate and Assembly. This I will endeavor to do as concisely as possible.

It is well to understand clearly at the outset that the bill is the same now, in all essential features, as it was when first introduced. None of the amendments that have been adopted touch any vital principle. The lines of the so-called Australian system have been followed faithfully from first to last. The only changes are as to matters of detail. One great object of those who have had charge of the measure has been to make the meaning of each provision entirely clear; and they have not hesitated to make changes in the forms of expression, whenever by so doing they could the more surely accomplish that purpose. Only three of the Senate amendments are at all important, and those were made at my own suggestion. One of the three deals with the form of the official ballot.

The New York election laws now require the use of several different kinds of ballot. One ballot is indorsed "State," another "County," and still another "Congress," or "Senate," or "Assembly." Sometimes there are as many as eight or nine of these separate tickets for the voter to use, and as many different ballot-boxes for their reception. This provision in our present law was continued in the ballot-reform measures that were passed by the Legislature of 1888 and 1889. Those bills, however, instead of permitting a separate ticket for each set of party candidates, required the names of all candidates nominated for a particular office to be printed upon the same ticket, those of each party grouped together under the proper party name. For example, under that system, if it had been enacted into a law, the names of Republican and Democratic candidates for all State offices would have been printed upon the State ticket in parallel columns, each column headed by the word or words designating the party by which the candidates therein mentioned were placed in nomination. There would have been, besides the State ticket, several others, such as the county ticket, or the congressional ticket, which would be prepared in the same way. The Massachusetts law upon this subject, instead of requiring separate ballots for the different kinds of offices, prescribes the use of one large ballot, sometimes called the "blanket" ballot, which contains the names of candidates for all the various offices to be filled. While engaged in the preparation of the bill now pending, I became thoroughly convinced that the Massachusetts plan is far less intricate and cumbersome than our own. The result was that the bill as introduced prescribed that there should be but two kinds of ballots—one, called the municipal ballot, to contain the names of all candidates for municipal offices, and the other, called the general ballot, to contain the names of candidates for all offices other than municipal. The names of candidates for each office were to be arranged under the designation of the office.

This last provision as to the arrangement of candidates upon the ticket was altered before the bill passed the Senate. It was thought best to revert to the original scheme of grouping candidates together under party names. The idea was thereupon embodied in the following language, which may be found in section 17 of

the bill : "The names of all candidates shall be placed on the ballot in parallel columns, each column headed by the title of the party represented by the candidates therein named, as stated in the certificates of nomination, so that the candidates of the various parties shall be grouped together under their respective party names. When candidates are nominated otherwise than by convention, committee, or primary meeting, the names shall be placed in a column by themselves, headed by such words as were used in the certificate of nomination to designate their party principle, together with the information that such candidates were not nominated by convention, committee, or primary meeting. There shall be printed in each column the name of but one candidate for each office to be filled. The first column shall contain the titles of the various offices to be filled. The last column shall be left blank in order that the voter may have sufficient space opposite the title of each office to write or paste in the names of any persons not mentioned in the ballot for whom he may wish to vote."

It is evident that the candidates whose names will be printed upon ballots will generally be those nominated by party conventions; and it is equally evident that the great mass of voters will generally vote a straight party ticket. This provision as to the form of the ballot, recognizing existing conditions, makes an arrangement which will enable the average voter to carry out his intentions with the greatest ease and certainty. The plan has the further merit that it aids the illiterate man in fixing the precise location of his party ticket upon the ballot, so that he can vote intelligently without the assistance of the election officers.

The bill as introduced followed the Massachusetts statute in requiring the voter to designate by a mark the candidate of his choice. Governor Hill expressed the opinion, in his last annual message to the Legislature, that an act thus framed would violate a provision of our State constitution. I need not stop to examine the grounds on which this opinion was based. It is sufficient to say that the objection could be fully met by a comparatively unimportant change in the bill. Such a change was, therefore, made and the bill now requires the voter to cross or erase from the ballot the names of all candidates except those for whom he wishes his vote to be counted.

The only other important amendment made to the bill before it passed the Senate was one permitting the use of unofficial ballots when a candidate shall have died before election day; but such unofficial ballot is to contain only the name of the person voted for in place of the deceased candidate. The original draft permitted the use of unofficial ballots at a polling-place, if from any cause the official ballots were not ready for distribution or in case the supply should be exhausted before the closing of the polls. It was urged very strenuously by some persons that the use of unofficial ballots ought also to be allowed whenever a candidate should die or decline the nomination after his name had been printed upon the official ballot. The friends of the bill were willing to concede that some such provision should be made in the event of the death of a candidate; but that is as far as they would go in that direction. They accordingly prepared and offered the amendment above mentioned, which has been incorporated in the bill.

During the debate in the Assembly the enemies of the measure tried to make capital of the fact that the Judiciary Committee had amended it in several particulars. Those amendments, with one exception, were not at all material; and, furthermore, they were accepted by the promoters of the bill. The objectionable amendment was eliminated when the bill was on its final passage. I will merely mention two or three of the more important ones that were allowed to remain.

Section 5 provides that fifty voters may nominate by certificate any candidate for an office to be filled by the electors of a county, district, city, or other division less than the entire State. It was thought best, for obvious reasons, to increase this number in the cases of nominations to be made in the city and county of New York, the county of Kings, and the city of Brooklyn. Consequently the following amendment was adopted : "When the nomination is for an office to be filled by the voters of the city and county of New York, or of the county of Kings, or of the city of Brooklyn, the number of signatures so required shall not be less than three

hundred, and when the nomination is for an office to be filled wholly or in part by the voters of only a portion of the said city and county of New York or of the said city of Brooklyn, less than the whole, such number shall not be less than one hundred." Another of these amendments provides that in the city and county of New York municipal ballots shall contain the names of all candidates other than candidates for the offices of member of Congress, State Senator, and member of Assembly; while still another requires that sample ballots shall be printed and in possession of the county clerk seven days before the day of election, subject to public inspection, in order that mistakes, if any there are, may be discovered and corrected.

Those who are in any degree familiar with the bill will understand from what I have written just what its provisions now are. Whoever examines it critically and impartially must pronounce it to be a very complete and practical measure. I believe the great body of our people are anxious that it should be placed upon the statute-books. They earnestly hope that when it reaches the executive chamber it will not meet the same cruel fate which there befell its unfortunate predecessors.

CHARLES T. SAXTON.

IV.

WHAT AMERICANS READ.

IN a popular novel of the day, a visiting Englishman asks his American hostess, "Do Americans read?" The reply is: "They know how to read, but I never could see that the educated classes read."

It has been said that the trend of a man's thought can be learned by noticing what he reads, and again, that the index to one's real nature is found in the occupations which engage his leisure hours.

What does the average American read, morning and evening, on the train or ferry, by the fireside, at the breakfast- or dinner-table, in the office and counting-room, at the street corners and in public houses? What but daily papers, from Christmas to Easter, and from Easter to Christmas again? Every spare moment is filled with the perusal of papers of some kind. The breakfast-table becomes a silent hour for the family, so that the father may read the news of a great world, and an evening paper claims the later hours of the day. Opportunities for social intercourse, for the cultivation of home friendships, for the exercise of helpful, neighborly influences are all sacrificed at the feet of this huge, inexorable Juggernaut of Newspaper-Reading.

That a man of intelligence and enterprise should acquaint himself with leading current events in his own and foreign countries cannot be denied. It is equally necessary that he should be fully abreast of his own business interests. In a certain sense, a man cannot live successfully in the world and not be of it. If he would hold a place among men of affairs, he must be an integral part of their life, and to this end must be acquainted with the thoughts and events that are occupying the attention of other men. He must also be well informed in his own line of business and in all others which impinge upon it.

Neither is the usefulness of an excellent daily paper, one of the ably-edited publications which are found in our large cities, and of which we have a right to be proud, denied. On the contrary, its office is held in the highest esteem, and the public indebtedness to this faithful public servant can be best reckoned when we compare the present with ante-newspaper days. When used with judgment, its educational power is tremendous. But the grandest agencies may become perverted by abuse. One may well doubt whether the innumerable quick, alert, logical, practical men who devote one or two hours each day to the issues of the daily press are sufficiently compensated for the time so spent. The constant pouring into one's mental hopper of all the good, indifferent, and bad matter which is daily published in newspaper form weakens the mental powers, results in confusion of thought and weakness of memory, and induces a state of mental debility wherein a man loses the power to comprehend and the taste for the more substantial and enduring forms of literature.

Scores of items in the best papers, even, can be omitted from the daily reading without loss. Records of the court-room, startling accidents, gratuitous advertise-